

Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and a water resource of tremendous ecological and economic importance. For over twenty years, efforts to protect and restore the Bay have been led by the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council—Bay area governors, the mayor of the District of Columbia; the EPA Administrator, and the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body. This unique regional partnership has defined environmental improvements needed in the Bay and developed a strategy that blends regulatory and voluntary processes.

A) Environmental and Health Results Expected

One of the key measures of success in achieving improved Chesapeake Bay water quality will be the restoration of submerged aquatic vegetation. To achieve improved water quality needed to restore submerged aquatic vegetation, the Chesapeake Bay Program partners committed to reducing nutrient and sediment pollution loads sufficiently to remove the Bay and the tidal portions of its tributaries from the list of impaired waters.

- 1) **Prevent water pollution and protect aquatic systems so that overall aquatic system health of the Chesapeake Bay is improved and acres of submerged aquatic vegetation increase.**

2002 Baseline: 85,252 acres	By 2005: 91,000	By 2008: 120,000
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- 2) **Reduction in number of pounds of nitrogen entering the Bay each year from 1985 levels:**

2002 Baseline: 51 million lb.	By 2005: 74	By 2008: 94
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- 3) **Reduction in number of pounds of phosphorus entering the Bay each year from 1985 levels:**

2002 Baseline: 8 million lb.	By 2005: 8.7	By 2008: 9.7
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- 4) **Reduction in number of tons of sediment entering the Bay each year from 1985 levels:**

2002 Baseline: <u>0.8</u> tons	By 2005: 1.06	By 2008: 1.37
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B) Key Strategies

EPA and Bay area States have agreed to an approach to meeting restoration goals for Chesapeake Bay including the following key actions for FY 2005:

- develop and implement pollution reduction strategies;
- fully implement base clean water programs in the Bay watershed; and
- implement recommendations of expert panel on funding options.

1) Pollution Reduction Strategies

In 2004, States will develop pollution reduction strategies for each of the watersheds within the larger Bay watershed. These strategies are to define specific, localized approaches to meeting new State water quality standards and to restoring impaired waters by the year 2010. Although each strategy will describe a series of steps specifically designed for that watershed, most strategies will include the following measures:

- Implement advanced treatment at sewage treatment plants (see Program Activity Measure IV-CB-1 providing for an increase in the percentage of wastewater flow to the Bay treated by Biological Nitrogen Removal increase from a 2002 baseline of 48% to 60% in FY 05 and 69% by 2008);
- Reduce nutrients and sediments from farms through effective implementation of voluntary programs for the reduction of nonpoint sources of pollution and issuance of permits for confined animal feeding operations;
- Expand the number of streamside forest buffers (see Program Activity Measure IV-CB-2 providing for an increase in the miles of forest buffers from a 2002 baseline of 1,298 to 4,000 in FY 05, to 7,000 in 2008);
- Develop innovative approaches for watershed scale management of water quality such as watershed permits that support pollution trading and promote state-of-the-art technologies.

For FY 2005, EPA has requested new funding of \$10 million to be used for targeted grants to support watershed management in the Chesapeake Bay area.

2) Core Programs in the Bay Area

In addition to new watershed-specific strategies, EPA and State partners will continue to implement core clean water programs that are essential to maintaining past progress in improving the health of the Bay. For example, Bay area States will continue to provide low interest loans for the financing of sewage treatment systems, will continue to implement comprehensive, statewide programs for reducing nonpoint sources of pollution, and implement the discharge permit program with respect to discharges from storm water facilities, confined animal feeding operations, sewage treatment plans and combined sewer overflows.

3) Implement Financing Recommendations of Expert Panel

In January 2003, the Chesapeake Bay Commission published the results of a study estimating the costs of achieving the commitments contained in the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement. The cost of achieving the water quality improvement commitments alone is estimated to be \$11.5 billion over ten years. Level funding via existing revenues sources adds up to only \$2.1 billion, leaving a \$9.4 billion funding gap. A Blue Ribbon Panel was established in early 2004 to consider funding sources and make recommendations for financing of watershed strategies. The report of the Panel is expected in October of 2004 and in FY 2005, EPA will work with the Commission and other partners to implement the report recommendations.

D) Grant Program Resources

Grant resources supporting this goal include new funding of \$10 within the Targeted Watershed Assistance Grant Program reserved for Chesapeake Bay (see appendix).

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